



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Helene Nelson, Secretary

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For Immediate Release

**SIX COUNTY CONSORTIUM IN WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN
RECEIVES \$100,000 FAMILY CARE GRANT**
*Buffalo, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon
Counties to Build Long Term Care Partnership*

LACROSSE— The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services today awarded a \$100,000 grant to a six county partnership in west central Wisconsin to develop a plan to expand the successful Family Care program that gives seniors and people with disabilities the choice to get long term care in their own homes and communities as an alternative to nursing home care. Last month, Governor Jim Doyle unveiled plans in his annual State of the State address to expand the Family Care program statewide within 5 years.

“Seniors and people with disabilities overwhelmingly prefer home and community care options to nursing homes when possible,” said Helene Nelson, Secretary of the Department of Health and Family Services. “Family Care has proven people can get the long-term care they need and prefer, and that this can save money for taxpayers by helping people stay healthy and independent.”

Secretary Nelson is in LaCrosse today to award \$100,000 to the West Central Consortium for Long-Term Support and Health Care Reform, a partnership that involves six counties and one private organization: Buffalo, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon and Group Health Cooperative of Eau Claire. This new organization will develop a regional framework to provide Family Care to people in the area, capitalizing on the experience of La Crosse County which operates a successful Family Care program.

The \$100,000 grant is the seventh in a series of grants, totaling \$1.4 million, that Governor Doyle and Secretary Nelson will award to communities around the state to lay the groundwork for expanding Family Care statewide and eliminating waiting lists for community-based long term care. While Wisconsin has been a national leader in offering community-based alternatives to nursing home care, about 11,500 people are on waitlists for community care statewide.

There are currently a total of 230 people in the six-county area on a waiting list for community care.

Family Care is a successful pilot program in five counties in Wisconsin including: Fond du Lac, LaCrosse, Milwaukee, Portage and Richland counties. A recent evaluation of Family Care found that it saved an average of \$452 per person per month in total Medical Assistance expenditures in the four non-Milwaukee counties during 2003 and 2004. It did so by helping people stay healthy and more independent in their homes and communities. Family Care also saved money in Milwaukee.

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